

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

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R 231945Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2720

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 0788

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PFOR, MILI, BR, VE, NS, GY

SUBJECT: GOG STILL BELIEVES ITS NEIGHBORS HAVE AGGRESSIVE INTENTIONS

REF: GEORGETOWN 0670

1. I SAW FONMIN FRED WILLS APRIL 23. HE VOLUNTEERED FOLLOWING INFORMATION UNDER GENERAL HEADING OF "WHAT IS MAKING MY LIFE UNPLEASANT THESE DAYS".

2. WILLS PRINCIPAL CONCERN WAS WITH BRAZIL. HE SAID BRAZILIAN CHARGE HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO MAKE A FORMAL PROTEST REGARDING ALLEGED OVERFLIGHTS OF BRAZILIAN TERRITORY BY GUYANESE MILITARY AIRCRAFT THIS MONTH. WILLS SAID BRAZILIANS KNOW FULL WELL THAT AIRPORT AT LETHEMIS SO LOCATED THAT AIRCRAFT ARE OBLIGED TO OVERFLY BRAZILIAN TERRITORY TO MAKE SAFE LANDING. THIS PRACTICE HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR YEARS AND INVOLVED BOTH CIVILIAN AND MILITARY AIRCRAFT. HE FOUND VERY HOLLOW ALLEGATION THAT THE OVERFLIGHT WAS BY A NEW TYPE OF AIRCRAFT ABOUT WHICH BRAZILIAN MILITARY COMMAND HAD RAISED OBJECTION. WILLS SAID ONE SPECIFIC INCIDENT

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BRAZILIANS CITED WAS 15 KILOMETER PENETRATION OF BRAZILIAN TERRITORY

ON APRIL 12 (GOG CLAIMS IT TOOK PLACE 8). WILLS ACKNOWLEDGED THE PENETRATION BUT SAID IT WAS CAUSED BY PILOT ERROR IN RECOGNITION OF LANDMARK VILLATE. WILLS SAID HE COULD SEE LITTLE POINT IN GOB RAISING THESE POINTS UNLESS IT WAS TO "DESTABILIZE ME".

3. AS ANOTHER INDICATION OF HARDENING GOB POSTURE, WILLS CITED HIS PROPOSAL TO MEET WITH GOB FONMIN SILVEIRA AT ANY LOCATION SUITING LATTER'S CONVENIENCE EXCEPT PORT OF SPAIN. SILVEIRA FIRST AGREED BUT WITHIN LAST 10 DAYS HAS BACKED OFF ON GROUNDS HE IS TOTALLY INVOLVED IN PREPARING FOR GOB PRESIDENT GEISEL'S EUROPEAN TRIP.

4. WILLS SAID HIS "INTELLIGENCE" HAS PICKED UP AN INDICATION, TO WHICH HE FEELS HE MUST GIVE SOME WEIGHT AT LEAST, THAT BRAZIL HAS PROPOSED TO SURINAM THAT GOB WOULD SUPPORT SURINAM'S TERRITORIAL CLAIM IN SOUTHEASTERN GUYANA (NEW RIVER TRIANGLE) IN RETURN FOR SURINAMESE COOPERATION ON OTHER UNSPECIFIED MATTERS. WILLS TIED THIS REPORT TO A PROPOSAL BY GOB TO HAVE JOINT COMMISSION RESURVEY THE PRESENT BOUNDARY MARKERS ALONG BRAZIL-GUYANA FRONTIER IN ORDER TO RESTORE AND REFURBISH MARKERS WHICH HAVE DETERIORATED OVER THE TEN YEARS OR MORE SINCE THEY WERE INSTALLED. ACCORDING TO WILLS THE PARTY WOULD BEGIN ITS WORK AT NORTH END OF FRONTIER AND WHEN IT REACHED THE POINT AT WHICH SURINAM'S CLAIMS BEGINS, BRAZILIANS WOULD TERMINATE THE SURVEY ON GROUNDS THAT TERRITORY BEYOND SUCH POINT RIGHTLY BELONGS TO SURINAM. (COMMENT: I TOLD WILLS I FOUND THIS SOMEWHAT FAR FETCHED.)

6. FINALLY, WILLS SAID HE HAD BEEN DISTURBED BY A MEETING ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE BRAZILIAN CHARGE BETWEEN BRAZILIAN AND VENEZUELAN OFFICIALS IN MANAUS FROM MARCH 28-31. ACCORDING TO WILLS SOME 58 VENEZUELAN OFFICIALS UNDER LEADERSHIP OF A GENERAL TERAN (POSSIBLY TREFAN), OF WHOM THE MAJORITY WERE MILITARY, MET WITH LIKE NUMBER OF BRAZILIAN OFFICIALS IN A SEMINAR ALONG LINES OF NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE BRIEFING TO WHICH WILLS EXPOSED BY CANADIAN DEFENSE COLLEGE VISIT HERE LAST WEEK. WILLS SAID HE HAD LEARNED CONFIDENTIALLY THAT ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL TOPICS ON THE AGENDA WAS GUYANA AND THAT IN THIS CONNECTION CONFEREES DISCUSSED COORDINATION OF INTELLIGENCE AND "MEASURES". AMONG THE QUESTIONS RAISED BY VENEZUELAN SIDE, WILLS SAID, WAS THE EXTENT TO WHICH BRAZIL WOULD RESPECT VENEZUELAN TERRITORIAL CLAIMS IN THE EVENT OF BRAZILIAN INVASION OF GUYANA.

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7. COMMENT: AS DEPARTMENT, CARACAS AND BRASILIA WILL APPRECIATE A GOOD DEAL OF WILLS CONCERN HAS PRETTY FLIMSY BASIS. NONETHELESS, I AM SURE THAT IT REFLECTS THE SAME GHOSTS LURKING IN THE DARK CORNERS OF BURNHAM'S MIND. IN THE PAST I HAVE TOLD WILLS, IN RESPONSE TO SIMILAR ACCOUNTS, THAT I THOUGHT HE WAS SEEING GHOSTS AND THAT I COULD FIND NO LOGICAL REASON FOR EITHER BRAZIL OR VENEZUELA TO BE ENGAGED IN HOSTILE OR AGGRESSIVE ACTS DIRECTED

TOWARDS GUYANA. TODAY HE GENTLY ASKED ME NOT TO TELL HIM HE WAS
HAVING NIGHTMARES BUT TO UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS THE KIND OF
ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH HE IS FORCED TO TRY TO DO HIS JOB THESE
DAYS. ANY HARD INFORMATION THAT WOULD SERVE TO PUT ANY OF THESE
STORIES TO REST WOULD OF COURSE BE WELCOME.
KREBS

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